

That company was primarily a garrison organization; once its battalion deployed to the field, the various elements were parcelled out and rarely, if ever, worked as a team. Team Eagle would be just that—a team—and the Echo Company commander would have control of all these elements both in garrison and in the field.

The current J-edition MTOE creates an imbalance in resources and deprives a battalion commander of an effective

reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance force. The present HHC commander is overextended, while the Echo Company commander is underutilized. The creation of a Team Eagle would be an effective solution to these problems. It would concentrate combat power instead of dispersing it; it would establish a clear chain of command; and it would give the battalion commander a dedicated commander for his reconnaissance effort.

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The Case for A Unit Historian

LIEUTENANT ERIC W. STINEBRING

Esprit de corps, the pride a soldier feels for his unit, is not something that magically exists in one unit and not in another. It is developed in the minds of soldiers through a sense of their unit's history and traditions. Soldiers who have a strong sense of their unit's past and present develop a pride in and a sense of belonging to the organization. Because that spirit is a combat multiplier, it deserves the attention of all professional soldiers who seek to improve the combat readiness of their units. One method of improving a unit's esprit is to appoint a unit historian, preferably a junior lieutenant in the battalion who is genuinely interested in the unit's history and who is willing to devote some time and energy to developing a sense of esprit in his fellow soldiers.

Unfortunately, the role of unit historian has usually been given to the battalion adjutant. Since this is an additional duty, though, the S-1 generally pays little attention to it unless he happens to be particularly interested in the unit's past. Another problem is that an adju-

tant rarely serves more than 12 to 18 months in that position, which causes a high turnover rate in unit historians. A junior lieutenant generally stays in a battalion for three or four years, so his appointment as the unit historian affords greater stability for that position. It also allows the lieutenant's senior rater—the battalion commander—to evaluate his ability to write, organize, and work independently.

TOOLS

A unit historian has many tools that he can use to develop an effective history project. For example, the U.S. Army Regimental System (USARS), as outlined in AR 600-82, was created specifically to foster esprit in today's Army. The system not only gives all soldiers an opportunity to select a regimental affiliation that is meaningful to them but allows units to maintain ties with the past and develop a historical awareness in its soldiers.

A portion of the Regimental System

concerns the designation of Distinguished Members of the Regiment, as well as an Honorary Colonel of the Regiment and an Honorary Sergeant Major of the Regiment. These individuals—former members of the regiment who have contributed greatly to its history and traditions—can help a unit learn about its past through their personal involvement with the present organization. The distinguished member program adds considerably to a unit's efforts to develop esprit.

The unit historian should gather as much information as possible about his organization. An excellent place to begin is the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. The research librarians there are most helpful and can provide a great deal of information.

An advertisement in the locator file section of *Army Times* requesting information about the unit can yield a wealth of information; even one response from a former member of the unit can unlock many other doors as well.

If a wartime unit association exists,

the association president can provide a list of former members of the unit, many of whom will be happy to write, share photographs, and furnish information. Additionally, if a unit historian has an opportunity to meet face-to-face with former members of the regiment, he will gain much by interviewing these eyewitnesses to the unit's history. (For more help, see also "Unit Histories: A Guide to the Agencies That Can Help," by Major Glenn W. Davis, *INFANTRY*, January-February 1987, pages 13-14; and letter, *INFANTRY*, July-August 1987, page 4.)

INFORMATION

As soon as the historian has collected some information about the unit's history, he should begin disseminating it within the unit. He might establish a column in the unit's newsletter, if it has one, and develop a fact sheet that focuses on significant events in the unit's history for use by promotion and soldier-of-the-month boards. He can prepare short lessons to share at a unit award ceremony or during professional

development training. In addition, he should keep the former members of the regiment informed about the current unit.

A unit historian can create many opportunities for soldiers to develop esprit. Here are some examples of history-related projects:

- Develop a display containing photographs of the unit, past and present.
- Create a wall commemorating the soldiers of the unit who have given their lives to secure the freedom the unit's soldiers enjoy today.
- Build a display honoring the former soldiers of the unit who have earned the Medal of Honor or the Distinguished Service Cross.
- Display photographs of the Distinguished Members of the Regiment and highlight the contributions these soldiers have made to the unit.
- Include former members of the unit in newsletter mailings and invite them to social functions.
- Have the soldiers in the battalion send Christmas cards to former members of the unit to ensure that they are remembered during the holiday season.
- Sponsor visits to the unit so that

former members can see first-hand what their unit is doing today.

Through an aggressive unit history program, today's soldiers can gain a meaningful relationship with those who preceded them. Through photographs, letters, and direct contact with the former members of the regiment, a unit can develop a stronger sense of itself, at the same time learning much useful information. When conducting after action reviews of simulated combat battles, the unit can draw upon the actual combat experiences from its past to illustrate key points.

A good unit history program should focus on the element that is universal and central in war—the soldiers who serve. A unit historian who is energetic and hard working can help create a sense of esprit in a unit, and as a unit develops esprit, it becomes stronger and more combat-ready.

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COOP

The Commander's Organization Orientation Program

CAPTAIN MARK W. McLAUGHLIN

A professional officer, when the time comes for him to take command, wants to be as well prepared as possible. Many articles are written on the subject of preparing to assume command, but they normally concentrate on the change-of-command inventory and the unit's transition from one commander to another.

They seldom mention another aspect of assuming command—understanding the senior commander's intent, policies, and procedures, and what he expects.

A new company or battalion commander will receive an in-briefing from his senior commander, of course, but the discussion probably will not include

the requirements of day-to-day activities and reports. Each unit has policies and procedures that have developed through habit, location, and mission, and its commander's intent and interpretation of Army policies and procedures. To be effective, an incoming subordinate commander must learn to use and under-